

Appl. No.: 10/533,344  
Reply to Office Action of: 08/16/2007

REMARKS

In regard to claim 20 and the term "a latch", as explained on page 4, line 1, the upper back edge of the slide 9 locks under a shoulder 15. Thus, the strain relieve comprises a latch (the upper back edge of the slide 9) for latching the slide in a final position. The examiner is requested to withdraw his objection to claim 20.

Claims 1-6 and 14-20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Mosquera (US 4,975,076) in view of EP 1,248,321 A1 and Puerner (US 5,387,123). The examiner is requested to reconsider this rejection.

The examiner cites EP 1,248,321 A1 stating that Figs. 1-2e show a slide (3) being introduced into an opening of a housing (2) in a direction partially along an introduction direction of a flat cable (1) until the slide locks in a final position on the housing. The examiner stated that it would have been obvious to modify the connector of Mosquera by forming the slide to be introduced into the opening of the housing in a direction partially along an introduction direction of the flat cable until the slide locks in a final position of the housing as taught by EP 1,248,321 A1. However, EP 1,248,321 A1 does not have any disclosure or suggestion of a strain relief comprising the slide (3). EP 1,248,321 A1 merely describes the catch stop (13) as pulling the cable (1b) into the housing (2) by means of the recesses (14). The catch stop 13 pulling the cable (1b) into the housing (2) by means of the recesses (14) is not a disclosure or suggestion of a strain relief. Furthermore, claim 1 claims that the flat flex cable

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is bent by a rib on the slide of the strain relief into a recess at a bottom of the housing proximate the introduction opening until the slide locks in a final position on the housing. There is no disclosure or suggestion of this in EP 1,248,321 A1. There is no suggestion to combine the cited references to produce both:

- A strain relief having a slide, which is adapted to be introduced into the introduction opening over the flat flex cable in a direction at least partially along an introduction direction of the flat flex cable into the introduction opening, and
- wherein the flat flex cable is bent by a rib on the slide into a recess at a bottom of the housing proximate the introduction opening until the slide locks in a final position on the housing.

This suggestion only comes after reading applicant's patent application.

Puerner merely discloses a rear cover 12. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the rear cover 12 forming a strain relief. In fact, column 2, line 65 - column 3, line 3 states that the sidewalls 21, 22 are spaced larger than the thickness of the cable to facilitate translation of the cable. There is no disclosure or suggestion of the rear cover 12 forming a strain relief.

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The features of claim 1 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 1 is patentable and should be allowed.

Dependent claim 2 claims that the slide forms a ramp, whose back end projects above a level of the opening during introduction into the opening and slides on the upper edge of the introduction opening, whereby the rib is pressed into the recess. This feature of the invention is not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. The examiner stated that Mosquera shows the slide (12) having a ramp with a back end (not labeled) projecting above a level of the opening. However, there is no disclosure or suggestion of the slide (12) having a ramp with a back end (not labeled) projecting above a level of the opening in which the slide 12 is introduced at least partially along an introduction direction of the cable (i.e., through the rear end). The features of claim 2 are not disclosed or suggested in Mosquera.

Though the claims dependent upon claim 1 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 1. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

Independent claim 16 claims a strain relief comprising a slide. As noted above, EP 1,248,321 A1 does not have any disclosure or suggestion of a strain relief comprising the slide (3), and Puerner does not disclose or suggest the rear cover (12) forming a strain relief. Claim 16, on the other hand, claims:

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- a strain relief comprising a slide extending through the opening,
- wherein the strain relief comprises a slot adapted to have the end of the flat flex cable pass therethrough,
- wherein the slide comprises a rib, and
- wherein the flat flex cable is bent by the rib on the slide into a recess of the housing when the slide is locked into a final position on the housing.

There is no disclosure or suggestion to combine the references to produce these claimed features of applicant's invention. How could cover member (12) in Mosquera be modified to form a slot adapted to have the end of the flat flex cable pass therethrough, and also have a rib which bends the cable into a recess of the connector block (14)? If it is not obvious what such a structure will be, how is it obvious to combine the reference to form such a structure?

The features of claim 16 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 16 is patentable and should be allowed.

Claim 17 claims that the strain relief is adapted to be pushed inward into the rear side of the housing, wherein the strain relief comprises a slide having a rib which is adapted to bend the flat flex cable into a recess of the housing when the slide is slid through the rear side of the housing into the

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slot. As noted above, EP 1,248,321 A1 does not have any disclosure or suggestion of a strain relief comprising the slide (3), and Puerner does not disclose or suggest the rear cover (12) forming a strain relief.

Mosquera merely discloses cover member (12) with strain relief detents (26) that are slid in direction A. Why would a person skilled in the art look to modify cover member 12 of Mosquera based upon slide (3) of EP 1,248,321 A1 or rear cover (12) of Puerner; both of which are not strain reliefs. Furthermore, movement of strain relief detents (26) in direction A is orthogonal to the movement of slide (3) in EP 1,248,321 A1 and rear cover (12) in Puerner. How would Mosquera be modified for strain relief detents (26) to move in direction A, but cover member (12) being slid in through the rear side of connector block (14) orthogonal to direction A? It just does not seem to make sense. If the construction does not appear to make sense, why is it obvious to combine the references to state that applicant's invention is obvious?

The features of claim 17 are not disclosed or suggested in the cited art. Therefore, claim 17 is patentable and should be allowed.

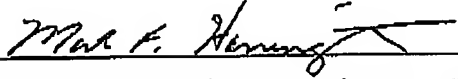
Though the claims dependent upon claim 17 contain their own allowable subject matter, these claims should at least be allowable due to their dependence from allowable claim 17. However, to expedite prosecution at this time, no further comment will be made.

For all of the foregoing reasons, it is respectfully submitted that all of the claims now present in the application are

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clearly novel and patentable over the prior art of record. Accordingly, favorable reconsideration and allowance is respectfully requested. Should any unresolved issue remain, the examiner is invited to call applicant's attorney at the telephone number indicated below.

Respectfully submitted,

  
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